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## **BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

### **November 12, 2015**

Members Present: Carl Hagstrom, Virginia Doerpholz, Martin Nolan, Natasha Michelson, Ben Thomas, Fred Wilkinson, Win Wright, and Selectmen's Representative, Nancy Carney.

Chairman Hagstrom convened the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Hagstrom asked members to review the minutes of last week's meeting.

Mr. Thomas made a motion to approve the November 5, 2015 Minutes. Ms. Doerpholz seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Hagstrom stated that he had a question regarding on-call pay for the Highway Department employees. Ms. Carney reported that Gene Cuomo met with the Board of Selectmen but no decision had been reached.

Ms. Hagstrom asked about the weather forecasting software and Ms. Carney stated that the Board of Selectmen approved purchasing the software at a cost of \$995 per year.

Mr. Hagstrom asked about training for the Highway Department employees. Ms. Carney reported that aside from culvert training, which was done this year, some training was free. Mr. Cuomo didn't increase his budget request. Ms. Carney reported that the Board of Selectmen haven't approved any budgets.

7:10 – Cemetery Budget:

Mike Grab presented the Cemetery budget.

Mr. Grab brought in pictures that show the repair work that has been done with the curbs and monument stones. Mr. Grab stated that the Cemetery employees have accomplished a lot in fixing the curbs and it had cost a lot less than the quote that was received in the amount of \$600, even with the purchase of the tripod and come along.

Mr. Hagstrom asked about the truck and Mr. Grab reported that tires had been purchased and the fluid undercoating was done. The undercoating was done each fall.

Mr. Hagstrom asked how many employees there were and Mr. Grab reported 2.

Mr. Grab reviewed the budget comparisons sheet – comparing the budget for 2008 versus what was being requested for 2016. Mr. Grab stated that it was a pretty drastic decrease and Committee Members stated they were doing a nice job.

Committee Members reviewed the pictures and were impressed with the work being done.

Mr. Nolan asked about Line 318 – Labor Contracted Services and Mr. Grab stated that they were keeping it flat – had asked for \$2,000 in the past and keeping at \$2,000 – spending some money now. Mr. Grab reported that John Holman would be doing some tree work and next year they may need to take down another big pine. Mr. Grab discussed doing some replanting and stated that there was a lot of room for expansion.

Mr. Nolan asked what was done with Line 353 – Advertising. Mr. Grab reported that they advertise for a helper, which runs 3 days in the Keene Sentinel for \$133.40 – it is one ad – running for 3 days. Mr. Grab stated that it was required by the Board of Selectmen to advertise for Tim Bidwell’s position as it was seasonal. The Cemetery Sexton position carries over but Mr. Bidwell needed to reapply in the spring. Advertising for the seasonal position was done to stay within Town policy. Mr. Grab discussed the hiring process they go through each spring for the seasonal part-time position and stated that Mr. Bidwell has been hired as he does good work.

Mr. Grab stated that Line 120 – Salaries – Part-time had increased by \$400 - have lost hours because of keeping that line item flat.

Mr. Nolan asked why spending was so low on Line 685 – Materials. Mr. Grab reported that the number has gone up \$700 or more as invoices have come in. Mr. Grab discussed the difficulty in coding invoices to line items and shared that they haven’t been consistent in coding for Line 650 – Groundskeeping or Line 685 – Materials and have gone back to correct the coding with Ms. Favreau. Discussion continued on the coding difficulty and Mr. Grab stated that he would look at this next year to keep it simple.

Line 630 – Equipment Maintenance/Repair – have to keep equipment running.

Mr. Grab stated that Cemetery budget was reduced by \$1,544.

Mr. Grab asked if there were any other questions.

Ms. Carney stated that as a reminder the CIP request needed to go in the Capital Outlay section of the budget so that we have the bottom figure for operating and capital improvements.

Ms. Carney explained the reasoning for putting on the 2016 Budget request.

Mr. Grab reported on the document preservation work being done and that the Cemetery Trustees put in a CIP request in the amount of \$5,000 for Phase Three for 2016. Mr. Grab shared that each page was being preserved and while the binder was apart each page was scanned into a pdf file, which has been put onto a cd and the originals put in the vault. The pdf documents would be printed so that a hard copy can be put in the office.

Mr. Grab reported that the Cemetery Trustees also put in a CIP request to purchase a zero turn mower and that bids would be obtained. Mr. Grab stated that of the \$600 received - \$200 goes into the Pine Grove Capital Reserve fund and \$400 goes into perpetual care and they can’t touch that principal. There is \$10,000 in Capital Reserve which was established in 1979. Mr. Grab

shared that Ms. Thompson had said that it was for maintenance of the cemetery and the definition needed to be changed and could be done by a warrant article to add the additional language: purchase of equipment. Mr. Grab would like to spend up to \$5,500 to purchase a zero turn mower which would give them 2 movers. Mr. Grab stated that they have proven that zero turn mowers are very efficient – savings show in salaries and that Capital Reserve is a zero tax impact and a good use of that money to maintain the cemetery.

Ms. Carney stated that the Board of Selectmen are working on this – would do a warrant article to change the language and type of fund from Capital Reserve to Expendable Trust. Ms. Carney stated that if something happened – didn't want to have to wait for Town Meeting. Ms. Favreau shared that she was researching to find out when it was created.

Mr. Hagstrom asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Hagstrom thanked Mr. Grab for meeting with them.

7:45 – Library Budget:

Richard Goettle and Nick Noyes presented the Library budget.

Mr. Wilkinson asked what would be done with items once received and Mr. Wright asked if they have the capability to preserve. Mr. Noyes stated that the Library Trustees haven't discussed that yet and that some items are too valuable to be on permanent display. Ms. Carney reported that ongoing discussion between the Board of Selectmen and the Library Trustees was being held to determine the final resting place of the items. Discussion continued on the items, value and how to protect.

Mr. Wilkinson asked if they expected to spend \$15,000 – Line 320 – Legal – Mr. Noyes stated that they don't know.

Line 320 – Legal – reduced by \$15,000.

Line 110 – Salaries – Full-Time – increase of \$2,816.45

Line 120 – Salaries – Part-Time – increase of \$2,103.32

Mr. Goettle discussed Line 210 – Group Insurance – Health – requesting \$17,500. Ms. Favreau shared that the rates were locked in at \$17,200. Mr. Goettle stated that the budget request could be reduced. Ms. Favreau shared that she thought that the budget was incorrect last year. Discussion continued on Line 215 – Group Insurance - Life and Line 219 – Group Insurance – Disability. Ms. Favreau stated that a memo has always been sent out regarding health insurance. Mr. Nolan asked about life and disability insurance. Ms. Favreau stated that \$254 under Line 290 – Other Benefits should be on Line 215 – Group Insurance – Life.

Mr. Wilkinson asked to compare the chart with the number and the total compensation was up 5.7% but it was actually up 8.6%.

Line 120 – Salaries – Part-Time – Mr. Goettle stated that this was up because of the rate increase and Mr. Wilkinson stated up almost 10%. Mr. Goettle explained the part-time salary rates and the time period.

Mr. Wilkinson asked Ms. Carney if the rates changed that much and Ms. Carney reported that the rates changed a little bit for employees. Mr. Goettle stated that based on rate and hours worked. Ms. Carney stated that for the general employees – the wage scale was adopted as of October 1 and the cost of living raise was effective April 1, 2016. Discussion continued on the increase in salary and the new wage scale. Mr. Goettle shared that there was a slight mix change with part-time employees.

Mr. Goettle stated that they have struggled to cover vacation with 2 people and that best practices state you don't have a building occupied by 1 person - adding 1 person at Step 0 to fill in as needed to keep the Library fully staffed.

Line 410 – Electricity – increase of \$450

Line 411 – Heat and Oil – reduced by \$2,500 - Mr. Thomas asked Ms. Favreau if we had a fixed price and Ms. Favreau responded no. Discussion continued on pricing and usage.

Line 625 – Postage – reduced by \$75

Line 670 – Books/Periodicals – no change

Line 560 – Dues/Subscriptions – increase of \$200

Line 562 - Software Purchase/Upgrade – increase of \$100

Line 342 – Data Processing – increase of \$125 – Fairpoint internet service

Line 550 – Printing - \$250 – not budgeted for last year

Line 412 - Water – increase of \$350

Line 341 - Telephone – increase of \$400 - phone bill almost doubled. Talking with Fairpoint – discount expired – trying to get restored. Want invoice to come to the Library directly.

Line 610 – General Supplies – reduced by \$1,000

Line 620 – Office Supplies – \$1,500 – not budgeted for last year.

Mr. Wilkinson stated that line items 610 & 620 were a 20% increase. Mr. Goettle stated the increase was due to volume. Ms. Michelson stated that it doubled since 2014. Mr. Goettle explained the expenses to date and stated that this year they were separating the line items out.

Line 692 – Snow Removal – Hired – increase of \$900.

Line 360 – Custodial Services - \$1,000 - having carpet cleaned – won't do again for 3 years.

Line 430 – Repairs/Maintenance – no change

Ms. Michelson asked about Lines 628 – Office Equipment and 629 – Equipment Purchase – Mr. Goettle explained that they were replacing the office computer and the public computer and that the catalog and public use computers were at least 4 years old.

Ms. Doerpholz asked how many Library patrons there were in a town of 2,000 people. Ms. Thomas stated that last year 770 unique users had checked out materials. Mr. Wright asked if the library card shows how many times the overdrive has been used. Ms. Thomas explained the service from the state was \$600 to subscribe – access to audio and eBooks.

Ms. Favreau reviewed the memo regarding health insurance for last year. Discussion was held on the cost budgeted for and Ms. Favreau shared that the cost was based on the number of weeks.

Mr. Nolan asked about the CIP request for repairing the front porch a few years ago and asked for an update. Mr. Noyes reported that the front porch was in pretty good shape. Ms. Thomas reported that when the front porch was painted, the painter found some areas that needed to be repaired and the work was done. Mr. Thomas reported that the copper roof was painted and eventually it would need to be replaced. Mr. Noyes stated that it was a future item on CIP and they don't have a quote on the work to be done.

Mr. Hagstrom asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Wilkinson stated that the Library was the only Town department that doesn't have to return overage and he was curious as to what the overage was this year. Mr. Wilkinson also stated his concern with the Library budget overall. Mr. Goettle stated that it was an increase of \$6,700, of that \$2,500 was step up in compensation and \$500 was the cost of living increase. Mr. Thomas stated that half was dictated by the Board of Selectmen – the increase in compensation. It was their recommendation and handed to the Library – it would be a 3% increase. Ms. Michelson shared that other departments have the same issue.

Mr. Goettle stated that \$2,500 on resources was out of their control and it wasn't a lot of money. They are growing a collection – have more expenses - offering more services. They try to get the best prices that they can and the phone is something they are working on. They are open to the public, offering this spectrum of services and trying to expand services to the community. Mr. Thomas shared that if the library needed more supplies – it says an increase in usage – being used and getting worn out – that is a good thing. Expanding the usage – costs go up – expansion is a good thing.

Mr. Goettle stated that next year there would be no increases in steps in terms of employees in the next calendar year. Mr. Goettle reviewed the review schedule for Library employees and when increases would happen.

Mr. Goettle shared that the Library has expanded new materials for patrons. They buy, manage, turn it over and have employees to help patrons. Mr. Nolan stated that he doesn't see the need to have 2 people in a slow period. Ms. Michelson shared that at a previous company, she was there by herself many times. Gail Landy stated that it wasn't just a matter of 1 person being there – it was a safety feature – there was value in having 2 people there. The Library Trustee Association has a lot of guidelines. Mr. Nolan stated that he doesn't agree with best practices the government and state puts out and he doesn't agree with this either. Mr. Goettle stated that he felt it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Hagstrom thanked Mr. Goettle and Mr. Noyes for meeting with them.

Members reviewed the Town Clerk, Supervisor of the Checklist and Tax Collector budgets for next week's appointments.

Mr. Nolan asked what the fiscal year was and why raises started in April. Ms. Carney explained that budgets are passed in March – go back to January. The cost of living rationale was to wait until after Town Meeting. Department Heads don't budget for the whole year – budget from April to December. Departments don't do anything unless they absolutely have to until after Town Meeting. Ms. Favreau shared that there was still money in the checking account that was carried forward.

Town Clerk budget was reviewed and Mr. Hagstrom stated that there are no full-time employees. Mr. Thomas stated that it was a salary increase. Ms. Favreau shared that a memo was done instead of redoing the total budget.

Mr. Hagstrom reported that the budget was up very little – Line 120 – Salary – increase of \$34.

Ms. Carney stated the overall budget request was \$56,133.

Ms. Carney stated the explanation for Line 130 – Elected Officials - should be 12 months – not 120.

Mr. Hagstrom stated Line 341 - Telephone was reduced by \$65. Ms. Favreau stated that the Library plan through Fairpoint was more expensive than other plans. Mr. Hagstrom asked Ms. Carney to request that the invoice go directly to the Library. Ms. Favreau shared that it was a combined invoice and was broken down. Mr. Thomas asked if the Board of Selectmen negotiated the plans and Ms. Favreau stated no – that departments do their own negotiating.

Line 628 – Office Equipment - purchase a new lap top. Mr. Nolan asked if that should be in the Town Clerk budget or the Supervisor of the Checklist budget. Ms. Carney stated that it was for the Town Clerk to use during Town Meeting.

Supervisor of the Checklist budget was reviewed and Ms. Doerpholz stated that it was pretty basic. Ms. Carney stated anticipating 4 known elections and 1 unknown.

Tax Collector budget was reviewed and Mr. Wright reported that the cost of living increase was in the budget at 1%. Mr. Hagstrom stated that the budget looked good – everything was down except for the salary – which wasn't much.

There being no further business, Mr. Hagstrom adjourned the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Submitted by;

Sheryl White  
Secretary